

GOOD NEWS

The Prophet Zakariyya was a noble man. He was an uncle of Maryam (Mary), and the priest of the shrine in Jerusalem. When Maryam was given to the service of Allah, the Prophet Zakariyya was made Maryam's guardian. Whenever the Prophet Zakariyya visited Maryam in her *mihrab* or niche in the shrine, he would find that she had fresh food. He would be amazed at this and would ask Maryam where this food came from.

"This is from Allah," Maryam would answer. "Allah gives in plenty to whoever He pleases." When the Prophet Zakariyya reached old age and was still childless, he prayed to Allah for a son: "My bones are weak and my head is shining with grey hair. Yet, my Lord! I

have never been disappointed in praying to You." Allah heard his beautiful prayers and said, "Zakariyya! We bring you good news of a son whose name will be Yahya." But Zakariyya wondered: "My Lord! How shall I have a son when my wife is barren, and I am now very old?" But Allah said: "So it shall be. It is

SACRED STORIES

easy for Me, for I created you, before which you were nothing." And so in his old age, the Prophet Zakariyya's prayers were answered and he had a son whose name was Yahya (John).

Yahya grew up to be a loving soul. Allah gave him wisdom, grace and purity while yet a child, and made him a prophet. Yahya grew up to be a good man, honouring his father and mother. He neither thought too much of himself nor did he disobey Allah. This story reminds us that Allah helps the believers in wonderful ways. He hears the prayers of His servants, even if what they want seems impossible.

THE BABY'S MIRACLE

One day, when Maryam was praying alone in her prayer-niche, Allah sent an angel to her in human form. Taken aback she said, "May the Merciful defend me from you! If you fear the Lord, leave me alone and go your way."

"I am the messenger of your Lord," replied the angel, "and have come to announce the gift of a holy son."

Maryam later gave birth to a son whom Allah had already named Isa ibn Maryam — Jesus, son of Mary. When she returned with the baby, fingers were pointed at her, but she simply pointed to the baby who performed his first miracle, by saying at once: "I am the servant of Allah. He has given me the Book and made me a prophet. His blessing is upon me wherever I go, and He has commanded me to be steadfast in prayer and give alms to the poor as long as I shall live. He has made me



kind and dutiful towards my mother. He has rid me of arrogance and wickedness. I was blessed on the day I was born, and blessed I shall be on the day of my death; and may peace be upon me on the day when I shall be raised to life."

The Prophet Isa was also given the power to perform a number of miracles, such as moulding a bird out of clay,

which, when he breathed on it, came to life. He gave sight to the blind, cured lepers and even raised the dead to life. But despite these clear signs, the people of Israel rejected him, accusing him of sorcery. Only a handful of his disciples responded to his call, saying, "We are the helpers of Allah."

The Prophet Isa continued his mission for several years, but only a few answered his call. The Children of Israel wanted to crucify him. But Allah saved him and they crucified another man, who was made to appear like him.

Goodnight Stories from the Quran by Saniyasain Khan

